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SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/PI, DRL/NESCA, OBO, AND NEA/MAG

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KMPI](#) [KPAO](#) [KDEM](#) [MO](#) [IT](#)
SUBJECT: MOROCCO MISCELLANY: FORUM FOR THE FUTURE,
PROPERTY, TAXATION

REF: STATE 082753

1. (U) Summary. Charge and A/Polcouns met on August 25 with Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (MFA) Secretary General Youssef Amrani. Ambassador Amrani requested the meeting to discuss preparations for the upcoming Forum for the Future, to held in Marrakech November 1-3. Charge used the opportunity to press Mr. Amrani on outstanding property issues and on concerns related to taxes and customs duties being applied to USAID contractors in Morocco. End summary.

Forum for the Future

2. (SBU) Amrani began by noting the need to speed up preparations for the Forum for the Future and for the need to identify "deliverables" that would be presented at the Forum. He stated that invitations had been prepared and were ready for signature, and added that Moroccan and Italian embassies in invitee countries had already been informed and had begun reaching out to their respective host governments. The MFA plans to establish a Forum website and to convene at an as-yet unspecified date a meeting in Rabat G-8 and BMENA Chiefs of Mission in Morocco. The MFA is considering two sites in Marrakech to house the Forum, but has not yet made a final decision.

3. (SBU) Concerned about the substance of Forum activities, Amrani mentioned the three preparatory workshops, including the Rabat sub-ministerial, and the importance of government/civil society partnership. The Charge suggested that women's issues could be a focus, and that Morocco was already a leader in this regard. Amrani expressed the need for feedback from Forum partners, to which the Charge replied that the USG was planning a coordination meeting this week, after which feedback should be forthcoming. Amrani expressed the need for a "new impulse" for the Forum, especially in Arab countries, and he commented that this is an important opportunity for Morocco, the United States, and for the region as a whole.

4. (SBU) Amrani inquired about the possibility of meeting with Deputy Secretary Steinberg, with whom he met at the Community of Democracies Ministerial in Lisbon, when Mr. Steinberg travels to New York for the UNGA.

Property

5. (SBU) Taking advantage of the opportunity to address

other issues with Amrani, the Charge noted that the Mission was still waiting for a reply to a request for confirmation of approval to build the NEC in Rabat. Land was purchased in 1988, but the Mission has sought confirmation so that detailed planning could begin. Amrani promised to look into it and expedite a reply.

¶16. (SBU) Charge also noted that the Mission has identified two parcels of land in Casablanca that would be appropriate to serve as the site of a new Consulate General, but that approval to purchase either one might require the consent of Moroccan King Mohammed VI. Amrani agreed to forward to the Palace a letter describing the properties and the desire to purchase one of them.

Taxation

¶17. (SBU) Finally, Charge raised as well the outstanding concern that the Ministry of Finance had attempted to apply duties and taxes on USAID contractors)- in violation of the 1957 cooperation agreement. Amrani asserted that the issue should be resolved. He called a representative of the MFA Legal Office, who confirmed that the Customs Agency had been informed that USAID should be permitted duty-free import, but had not responded. The Legal Assistant noted, however, that the MFA considered the 1957 agreement as remaining in force.

Comment

¶18. (SBU) While the pace of much activity in Morocco has slowed due to Ramadan, Amrani clearly remains engaged and interested in advancing these issues, and post will continue at every opportunity to press for their successful resolution. Amrani recognizes the significance of the Forum for the Future and evinces firm commitment to ensuring that it is an unqualified success. The Mission looks forward to additional information about Forum planning, and to working with Morocco to bring this important undertaking to rich fruition. End Comment.

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